

## INDIA-PAPUA NEW GUINEA BILATERAL RELATIONS

### POLITICAL RELATIONS

1. India opened its High Commission in Port Moresby in April 1996. Diplomatic relations with the Independent State of Papua New Guinea (PNG) were earlier conducted from Suva/Kuala Lumpur. PNG opened its resident Diplomatic Mission in New Delhi in October 2006. India and Papua New Guinea enjoy warm and friendly relations. The two countries have been working closely in international fora, including the Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations Organization.

2. There have been notable visits from India to PNG. The **President of India**, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, paid a first-ever State Visit to PNG from 28 to 29 April 2016 at the invitation of the Governor General of PNG, Grand Chief Sir Michael Ogio. During the visit, four MoUs were signed on – (a) Agriculture Research Cooperation between University of Technology, Lae (PNG), and Indian Council for Agricultural Research (India); (b) Cooperation in the Health Sector; (c) Indian Line of Credit of US \$100 million for Infrastructural Development in PNG; and (d) Setting up a Centre of Excellence in IT by India in PNG. During the visit, the President of India also made an announcement to provide retro-viral drugs and equipment for HIV patients in PNG, which were later supplied by the Government of India.

3. Other important visits from India included – (i) a 3-member delegation led by Dr. M. Rajeevan, **Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences**, to participate in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) Conference, held in Port Moresby on 23-25 August 2017; (ii) a 2-member delegation from **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)**, comprising CA M. Devaraja Reddy, former ICAI President, and CA Mangesh P. Kinare, ICAI Council Member, who visited Port Moresby from 17-19 July 2018 to hold discussions with the Certified Practising Accountants (CPA PNG) and the Society of Indian Chartered Accountants Inc (SICA), in order to facilitate and support the application of CPA PNG for its membership in the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC); (iii) a 3-member Indian delegation, comprising two representatives of **EXIM Bank of India** – Ms. Meena Verma, GM, New Delhi, and Ms. Aparna Kulkarni, representative in Singapore – and Mr. S. Chinpau Ngaihte, Under Secretary (DPA-I), Ministry of External Affairs, who visited PNG from 25-29 November 2018 and met the local authorities to finalize the Agreement of Indian Line of Credit of US\$100 million to finance infrastructure related projects (US\$60 million for Bayer-Madang road project and US\$40 million for Hoskins-Kimbe road project) in PNG. The delegation also visited the site of Hoskins-Kimbe road project; (iv) **a four-member Indian delegation led by Cdr. P.K. Srivastava, Director, Ministry of Earth Sciences visited PNG from 25-27 July 2019 on a scoping mission to set up an Institute for Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Research in the Pacific region and a network of marine biology research Laboratories;** (v) **a two member delegation led by Justice Shri Sharad Arvind Bobde, Hon'ble Judge, Supreme Court of India and Sanjeev Kalgaonkar, Secretary General, Supreme Court of India visited PNG from 8-10 September 2019** to attend Commonwealth Judges and Magistrates Conference held in Port Moresby. Justice Shri Bobde delivered a keynote speech on “A judicial career from appointment to post retirement” during the event; and (vi) **Dr. Devyani Khobragade, Joint Secretary (DPA-II), MEA, accompanied by Shri Robin Jain, Attache (Fin-IIB), visited PNG on 17 December 2019**. She held meetings with Vice-Chancellor of University of PNG (UPNG) and had fruitful discussions on converting the Mahatma Gandhi Centre of Excellence in Information Technology (MG-CEIT) into a regional hub where ITEC trainees from Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau would undergo training in IT. JS (DPA) held a meeting with Director General (Bilateral) Ms.

Magdalene Shirley Moihe in the Department of Foreign Affairs and External Trade. Talks, among others, covered India's proposal to revise the existing MOU on CEIT to include conversion of the Centre into a Regional IT Training Centre and facilitation of appropriate gratis PNG visas for the foreign trainees.

4. The **Indian Naval Ship 'Sahyadri'**, commanded by Captain Anil Jaggi with more than 200 crew members on board, paid a goodwill visit to Port Moresby from 12-15 June 2017. The then High Commissioner of India and Captain Anil Jaggi jointly hosted a Dinner on Board on 13 June for about 300 dignitaries from PNG Defence Forces, Government officials, Diplomatic Missions, Indian businessmen and community members. This was the second visit; the first one was from 22-24 July 2006 by the Indian Missile Frigate Naval Ship 'Tabar'.

5. There have been regular high level visits from PNG to India. The highest level visit from PNG was by the then **Prime Minister Peter O'Neill**, who visited India for the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit, held in Jaipur on 21 August 2015, and outlined PNG's desire to see greater engagement by India with Pacific Island nations in the field of climate change, natural disasters, healthcare, education and other areas. Prime Minister Peter O'Neill held a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the Summit.

6. There were several other important visits from PNG to India – (i) As part of its Medium Term Development Plan-3, PNG has been working to develop its SMEs sector and set up Regional Youth Incubation Centres on Indian model. From 25-29 March 2019, PNG **Minister of Planning and Monitoring Richard Maru** visited New Delhi and held meetings in this regard. (ii) **Chief Electoral Commissioner** Patilias Gamato, accompanied by two officials from PNG Election Commission, visited Bengaluru from 10-16 May 2018 to witness Karnataka Assembly elections and interacted with BEL officials regarding supply of EVMs/VVPATs to PNG;(iii) A PNG delegation led **Minister for ICT and Energy Sam Basil** visited India to attend the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance held in New Delhi on 11 March 2018;(iv) A **25-member PNG delegation, led by Minister for National Planning & Monitoring Richard Maru**, visited India from 10-16 December 2017. The delegation also included Minister for ICT and Energy Sam Basil, Minister for Education Nick Kuman, and West New Britain Province Governor Sasindran Muthuvel;(v) Ms. Janet Sape, **President/Founder of PNG Women in Business**, participated in the Distinguished Visitors Programme which was held in India from 8-17 February 2016; (vi) **Minister of Trade, Commerce & Industry Richard Maru** visited India in January 2013 to attend the Partnership Summit 2013. He was accompanied by a delegation consisting of West New Britain Province Governor Sasindran Muthuvel and officials of Investment Promotion Agency. He held bilateral talks with India's Minister of Commerce & Industry Anand Sharma; (vii) **Minister for Petroleum & Energy William Duma** was invited as the Chief Guest at the Founding Day celebrations of Petronet LNG Ltd in New Delhi on 2 April 2013. He visited India from 30 March to 3 April 2013. He was accompanied by an 8-member delegation, which included senior officials of his Ministry, an Adviser from Prime Minister's office and a few businessmen. **Petronet/OVL delegations from India** later visited PNG twice and held discussions with State-owned Petromin LNG Holdings Ltd and various stakeholders in the LNG sector. An in-principle agreement was reached with Petromin for India off-taking of 22.5% gas from the proposed Gulf LNG Project. Discussions were also held with InterOil and others concerned for possible Indian participation in the Gulf LNG Project; (viii) A **Parliamentary delegation, led by Speaker Theodore Zurenuoc**, visited India from 26-30 August 2013 to bolster Parliamentary linkages between the two Commonwealth Parliamentary democracies; (ix) Brigadier General Francis Agwi, **Chief of PNGDF**, visited India in June 2013 to attend the passing out ceremony of PNGDF Cadet Officer at the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun. During the visit, he held

meetings with the Chief of Indian Army, Chief of Indian Navy and Vice-Chief of Indian Air Force in New Delhi; and (x) **Foreign Minister** Sam Abal paid a 4-day visit to India in July 2009. This was the first-ever bilateral Ministerial visit between the two countries during which he met India's External Affairs Minister, Minister of Commerce & Industry, Minister of State (ST) in Ministry of External Affairs, and Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas. Election Commissioner of PNG Mr. Patilas Gamato and 5 other senior officials from Electoral Commission of India visited India from 2-5 September to attend Association of World Election Bodies General Assembly in Bangalore and meet Election Commission of India officials in New Delhi. A team of officials from PNG Small and Medium Enterprises visited India from 3-9 November for a fact-finding trip at the invitation of National Small Industries Corporation of India. At Indian invitation, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Agisa Sekie along with Mr. Tommy Angau, Assistant Director, Asia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade attended the Indian Ocean Conference held in Maldives from 1-5 September, 2019.

#### **HUMANITARIAN AID AND OTHER ASSISTANCE**

7. India has been providing humanitarian aid and disaster relief to PNG from time to time. The latest assistance has been in the form of **drugs for HIV/AIDS patients in PNG**. A consignment of 7.2 million dosages of anti-retro viral drugs received from India, valued at approximately US\$3 million, was handed over to the Government of PNG in November 2016 by the Indian High Commissioner. **Computers and peripherals** worth US \$760,000 out of the cumulative grant-in-aid under India's Regional Assistance to Pacific Island Countries were provided to the Government of PNG during the year 2017-18. India has also been assisting PNG in their capacity-building efforts by way of **training under Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) and Colombo Plan**. Aid proposals in various other fields submitted by the Government of PNG, under the annual grant-in-aid, are under implementation by the Indian side.

8. The Government of India, under an MOU for Establishment of Centre of Excellence in IT, has set up a **Centre of Excellence in Information Technology** at the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby. The Centre is to be run, among others, by two IT Experts from India who have been stationed at the Centre for two years. The Centre is scheduled to open in March 2020.

9. The Government of India extended a **grant of US \$1 million to the Government of PNG towards earthquake relief** in areas, affected by the earthquake that struck PNG in February 2018.

10. The Government of India also extended a **financial assistance of US\$ 1 million to the PNG Government for relief and restoration work in the areas affected by Ulawun volcano which erupted in PNG in June 2019**.

#### **ECONOMIC & COMMERCIAL RELATIONS**

11. The bilateral trade figures between the two countries for the last few years are as follows:

Values in million US dollars:

Year >>	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 (upto 11/2019)
<b>Export from India to PNG</b>	52.19	39.45	36.35	41.93	49.72	38.57
<b>Import into India from PNG</b>	157.29	179.59	108.06	196.19	88.97	36.76

<b>Total Bilateral Trade</b>	209.48	219.04	144.41	238.12	138.69	75.33
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**12.** The **main items of export from India to PNG** include textiles, machinery & equipment, food items, manufactured goods, pharmaceuticals, surgical items, soap, washing powder, paper pulp, etc. However, these are not reflective of the actual trade since import of many Indian goods is via third countries. The **main items of import into India from PNG** are gold, copper ores & concentrates, timber, copra, marine products, coffee, vanilla and cocoa.

**13.** The first-ever **CII delegation from India** paid a 4-day visit to Papua New Guinea from 14-18 February 2016 to explore business opportunities. The delegation held meetings and interactions with a number of high ranking dignitaries, including the Prime Minister; Minister of Trade, Commerce & Industry; Minister for Mines; Minister for Petroleum; Minister for Transport and Infrastructure; Minister of Public Enterprises and State Investments; Minister of Health; Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture; Governor of West New Britain Province; Governor of National Capital District (NCD); Governor of the Western Highlands Province; Governor of Hela Province; and other high level officials and dignitaries at different events. The Prime Minister's wife hosted the lady delegation members at the National Parliament of PNG.

#### **CULTURAL RELATIONS**

**14.** The cultural interactions/initiatives include visit of an **ICCR-sponsored Siddhi Dhamal dance troupe** from India to PNG in October 2013. The troupe performed at the open Jack Pidik Park in Port Moresby which was hosted by the Governor of National Capital District Commission (NCDC) and was well attended. On 7-12 June 2013, in association with the University of Papua New Guinea, the High Commission of India organized an **Indian Film Festival** at the University. A set of the **Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi** was also presented to the University of PNG Library separately.

**15.** Since 2015, the Mission has been organizing the **International Day of Yoga** in PNG and Solomon Islands. On **23 June 2019**, Mission, in collaboration with the National Capital District Commission, celebrated the **5<sup>th</sup> International Day of Yoga in Port Moresby** at Sir Hubert Murray Stadium from 0700-1100 hours. **A record six thousand persons participated** in the event, including **National Capital District Governor Powes Parkop, who was the Chief Guest**; senior officials of the Foreign Office; local government officials; school students; juvenile inmates; members of diplomatic corps; and members of Indian Community. The event received wide publicity in print and visual media. On **30 June 2019**, a Yoga session was organized in **Mount Hagen** in Western Highlands Province as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Day of Yoga celebrations. The Provincial Chairman for Education participated in the event along with other provincial government officials. About 150 persons, including students, participated.

**16.** An MoU between Indian Council for Cultural Relations(ICCR) and the PNG University of Technology (UNITECH), Lae, was signed on 17 August 2018 to establish a long-term **ICCR Chair of Indian Studies at UNITECH**. On 19 February 2019, another MOU on **cooperation in the field of diplomatic training** was signed between the Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Department of Foreign Affairs of PNG.

**17.** There are approximately 3,000 members of **Indian Diaspora in PNG**. They include professionals like Chartered Accountants, University Professors, School Teachers, and Doctors. Some are engaged in professions like IT, finance, trading, business, missionary work, etc. There are influential Indians owning, directly or in partnership, prominent super stores

and businesses. Governor of the West New Britain Province of PNG Sasindran Muthvel is of Indian origin and Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardee. The India Association of PNG is quite active. The Indian Community is making significant contributions to the economy and society in PNG.

**18. India and PNG have extended e-visa facility to each other's citizens** for ease of travel between the two countries.

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### **Important Links:**

- High Commission of India, Port Moresby  
<https://www.hcipom.gov.in/>
- Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/India-in-Papua-New-Guinea-Embassy-of-India-Port-Moresby-1026235084116630/>
- Twitter  
[https://twitter.com/ind\\_png](https://twitter.com/ind_png)
- Ministry of External Affairs of India  
<https://www.mea.gov.in/>
- Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC)  
<https://www.itecgoi.in/>

Port Moresby, 31 January 2020